

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STARK OBJECTS TO PARTISAN HURRICANE KATRINA COMMITTEE

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, U.S. Representative Pete Stark (D-CA, 13th) gave the following statement in objection to H.Res. 437, a resolution establishing a partisan committee to investigate the preparation for and response to Hurricane Katrina. Tonight, President Bush is expected to address the nation about Hurricane Katrina efforts currently underway. Stark's statement follows:

"Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.Res. 437, which would establish a partisan committee to investigate the Hurricane Katrina preparation and response. I agree with the vast majority of the American people, who favor an independent commission of experts similar to the 9/11 Commission.

"Perhaps the American people, like me, are skeptical of the investigative integrity of the Republican Majority. After all, these are the same people who took more than 140 hours of testimony to investigate whether the Clinton White House misused its holiday card database but less than five hours of testimony about prisoner abuse in Iraq. The Downing Street Memo has sent shockwaves through the world and confirmed our worst fears about the Iraq war sham, but mum's the word from Republicans in Congress. You also won't find a single committee hearing about Valerie Plame, no-bid Halliburton contracts, or U.S. citizens being imprisoned without a trial.

"However, now they say that we should trust them to do a thorough investigation and not hide any damaging evidence regarding the woefully inadequate response to Katrina. Given their history, I think the American people deserve better than an empty promise. It is an insult to the thousands of dead, the victims of rape at the Convention Center, the people who waited five days for buses that never came and so many others who suffered needlessly, to suggest that one year before an election, this Republican Congress is going to pursue indictments not only of their President, but of themselves.

"After all, the senior Members of Congress who would populate this Committee are the same ones who advocated moving FEMA into the Homeland Security Department, zealously pursued the downsizing of disaster prevention and response programs, starved wetlands restoration and Army Corps of Engineers funding, and presided over rising poverty rates that make

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Americans all the more vulnerable.

“These foxes have already systematically dismantled the henhouse, sat idly by while the hens suffered, and now want to appoint a committee of foxes to find out what went wrong. I vote no on this ridiculous proposal.”